

# TOPIC ONE - FIRE SERVICE AWARENESS

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# 1 THE FIRE SERVICE

## 1.1 Legal Status

The New South Wales Fire Brigades (NSWFB) was constituted as a Government Department on 1 January, 1990 under the provisions of the *Fire Brigades Act 1989*, No. 192. The Commissioner is responsible for managing and controlling the organisation.

The NSWFB are within the portfolio of the Minister for Corrective Services and the Minister for Emergency Services.

## 1.2 Core Business

**The NSWFB prime directive is to reduce the impact of emergency incidents on the community.**

This directive is to be achieved by reducing the frequency and severity of incidents through public education and legislated safety standards; and the rapid and efficient control of incidents attended by the NSWFB.

Achievement of the prime directive is to be measured by:

- lives and property saved;
- protection of the environment; and
- reduction in lost productivity.

## 1.3 Statutory Obligations

The *Act* imposes on the NSWFB the following statutory obligations:

- to take all practicable measures to prevent and extinguish fires and to protect and save life and property in case of fire in any Fire District;
- to take measures anywhere in the State, to protect persons from injury or death, and property from damage, whether or not fire or a hazardous materials incident is involved. This authority exists whether or not the persons or the property are within a fire district.

- to take all practicable measures to protect and save life and property endangered by hazardous materials incidents, to confine or end such an incident; and to render the site of such an incident safe.

## 1.4 The Standard of Fire Cover

The NSWFB works with the community, government, and business:

- to prevent and respond to fires, hazardous materials incidents, rescues, and other emergency incidents; and
- to protect and preserve life, property and the environment.

The NSWFB protects the community by working to reduce the number and impact of emergency incidents through:

- effective and rapid response;
- emergency prevention programs; and
- building safety standards.

Money spent on maintaining and improving the NSWFB is an investment in community protection as the population and infrastructure grow.

Prevention programs can reduce the number and the severity of emergency incidents suffered by the community. The NSWFB provides the community with advice on fire safety measures such as the installation of smoke alarms, as part of its commitment to community protection.

The NSWFB's commitment to protecting the community and the environment is now clearly defined through its Environmental Awareness initiative and the continued development of its hazardous material incident response capability.

## 1.5 Services Provided

The NSWFB serves the community of NSW by:

- responding quickly to calls of fire and other emergency incidents (24 hrs a day, 7 days a week);
- protecting property within NSW valued at an estimated \$1200 billion and saving 80% of property at structure fires attended;
- reducing hazards in bushfire prone areas in co-operation with local councils, land management, and other agencies;
- inspecting buildings for structural safety;
- providing advice on fire safety to owners, builders, local councils, and other agencies;
- educating the community about the dangers of fire and other emergency incidents;
- conducting rescue at traffic, household and industrial incidents;
- responding, controlling and making safe chemical or dangerous substance spills/emergencies both on land and on inland waters;
- helping (with other emergency services) those in need as a result of natural hazard incidents such as floods, storms and earthquakes;
- providing the community with information regarding emergency incidents for a wide variety of uses including public safety, prevention programs and insurance claims;
- co-operating with Police, Ambulance, the DBFS, SES and other emergency services to achieve effective teamwork at each incident.

## 1.6 Guarantee of Service

The objective of the NSWFB is to guarantee help in any emergency at any time:

- in the Greater Sydney Area (GSA), within 10 mins from receipt of call on 90% of occasions; and
- in other areas, as quickly as possible. The distance to be travelled to incidents will clearly be a determining factor.

The NSWFB has developed and are progressively implementing a *Standard of Fire Cover* plan for the GSA. The NSWFB is investigating the development of a practicable response time objective and standard of fire cover outside the GSA.

In handling routine enquiries during office hours, the NSWFB guarantee to:

- return all telephone calls within 24 hrs;
- answer general correspondence within 10 days; and
- treat all members of the community as valued customers, whose needs are to be served cheerfully, promptly and effectively.

### Issue of Permits, Certificates and Studies

The NSWFB guarantee to issue:

- permits to burn (in accordance with *Section 10* of the *Bush Fires Act*) within 5 days of receipt of request;
- certificates for buildings over 25 m in height (under *Section 21* of the *Local Government Act, 1993*) within 40 days of receipt of request;
- a Fire Safety Study (as required by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*) within 40 days of receipt of request.

## 1.7 Cost of Services

The NSWFB provide a free service for:

- attending calls to fire within a Fire District;
- attending calls to a fire within a Fire District if hazardous materials are involved or if a hazardous material incident has a potential to cause fire;
- rescue operations.

Charges will normally be made for services such as:

- attending hazardous material (hazmat) incidents (where fire is not involved) for more than one hour from the time of arrival of the first NSWFB unit at the scene, anywhere in NSW;
- the Annual Statistical Report publication (a modest figure of \$30);
- attendance to repeated false calls from any automatic fire alarm system;
- providing an automatic fire alarm line monitoring service.

## 1.8 Quality of Service

As part of our commitment to providing a quality service to the community of NSW, the NSWFB has set the following objectives:

- reduce the number of structure fires through active fire prevention and education measures;
- reduce the response time of fire engines through the continuous improvement of response procedures, the introduction of new technology and the progressive development and implementation of improvements in service delivery and the locations of fire stations;

- reduce the number of incidents where the cause of fire is reported as **undetermined**;
- increase the percentage of fires confined to object/room of origin;
- reduce the average dollar loss suffered by the community as the result of structure fires, by a combination of improved training, public education measures and rapid response.

## 1.9 NSWFB Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is required to advise the Minister on any matter relating to the development, co-ordination, administration, and regulation of the NSWFB.

The Council comprises:

- the Commissioner of the NSWFB, who is Chairperson of the Council;
- a representative of the insurance industry;
- a representative of local government; and
- a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, has expertise in the field of fire prevention and control.

# 2 REGULATION AND LEGISLATION

## 2.1 Firefighters Responsibilities

To enable firefighters to exercise their responsibilities, they are empowered by:

- The Fire Brigades Act
- The Fire Brigades Act - Regulations

They must comply with provisions of the following:

- The Bush Fire Act
- The Bush Fire Act - Regulations
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act
- State Emergency and Rescue Management Act

and must have a working knowledge of:

- The Dangerous Goods Act
- The Building Code of Australia
- The Clean Air Act

## 2.2 History of the Fire Brigades Act

Before 1884, Fire Brigades in NSW were privately organized. It became apparent that the system was not meeting the needs of the community and that it needed to be reorganised.

During parliamentary debates on the *Fire Brigades Bill* in 1884, it was claimed that:

- No person had overall responsibility for the direction of fire fighting forces, and no person had any legal power to take action which it was often desirable to take.

As a result, the first *Fire Brigades Bill* was planned. Responsibility and authority were delegated to the Chief Officer to take appropriate action when fires occurred. This *Bill* and other legislation were subsequently repealed and replaced by the *Fire Brigades Act, 1989*.

*The Fire Brigades Act, 1989* applies only to the State of NSW. *The Fire Brigades Act, 1989* does not apply when the NSWFB respond to areas outside the State or to Commonwealth Territories situated within NSW. Reciprocal

agreements between NSW and the Commonwealth and between NSW and the bordering states, provide for the attendance of Brigades in each others' areas and for mutual assistance.

When the NSWFB respond to incidents in areas outside NSW, they are required to work under the direction of the interstate OIC. If that officer is not in attendance, the NSWFB are to observe the laws of the Commonwealth or State concerned.

When interstate Fire Brigades respond to incidents in NSW, they are required to work under the direction of the senior NSWFB OIC. If there is no OIC, the interstate Fire Brigades observe the laws of NSW.

*The Fire Brigades Act 1989* provides for the protection of persons and property from fire and from hazardous material incidents and for that purpose sets out the duties, the powers and the responsibilities of the NSWFB, these include:

- Duty to prevent and combat fire and hazardous material incidents.
- The establishment of Permanent and Retained Brigades.
- The general powers of Officers and Firefighters at fires.
- The attendance at **out of area** fires.
- Setting of charges for attending fires and other services.
- Contribution to Fire Brigades funding.
- Administration of the Brigade.
- The making of Regulations giving effect to the Act.

## 2.3 Conditions of Employment

### 2.3.1 NSWFB - Regulation

The *Regulations* are the rules of behaviour for the firefighter.

The regulations deal with the following broad subjects:

- Appointment and Conditions of Service for Permanent and Retained Firefighters.
- Firefighters' Duties.
- Disciplinary Provisions.

Firefighters must acquire and maintain a thorough knowledge of the *Regulations* and must comply with them.

### 2.3.2 NSWFB Fire Fighting Staff Award

There are two awards, one for permanent and the other for retained firefighters.

These Awards set the rates of pay and other provisions.

The Awards include:

- rates of pay;
- allowances;
- transitional provisions; and
- relieving payments.

Firefighters should know items for which they can make a claim. If they have any doubt, they should refer to the Awards.

### 2.3.3 Memorandum of Understanding

On 27 February 1995, the NSWFB and the DBFS signed a *Memorandum of Understanding*. This *Memorandum* formalises the co-operative fire fighting agreements already in place between the NSWFB and the DBFS.

The main features of the *Memorandum of Understanding* include the following points:

- each Service has its own particular skills, and each area of the State can be best served by providing the mix of resources appropriate to the specific needs of that area;
- within NSWFB Fire Districts, the NSWFB are the responsible agency, with operational jurisdiction for all fires and related incidents;
- within a bush fire district, the Fire Control Officer (FCO) is the responsible agency with operational jurisdiction for all fire-related incidents;
- where both Services are attending the same incident, the responsible agency is to consider the views of the senior ranking officer of the Service assisting when determining incident strategies;
- the OIC of each Brigade is responsible for tactically implementing strategy by that Brigade; and
- the NSWFB is the combat agency for responding to hazardous materials incidents. However, the nearest Brigade from whichever Service is most appropriate will respond when the incident is a minor petrol or diesel spill, especially one resulting from a collision, so long as that Brigade is resource accredited to meet the required minimum standard appropriate to the incident.

## 2.4 The Bush Fires Act

The *Bush Fires Act* describes the powers and responsibilities of the Department of Bush Fire Services (DBFS). These powers and responsibilities include the following:

- Prevention of Bush Fires;



- Bush Fire Brigades, Powers etc;
- Bush Fire Districts and Fire Control Officers;
- Fire Regions; and
- Bush Fire Fighting Fund.

Sections 40 - 41I of the *Act* are very important for firefighters.

### 3 ADMINISTRATION

#### 3.1 Financing of the NSWFB

##### 3.1.1 Insurance Companies

Insurance companies are required to contribute to the State 73.7% of the total net funded contributions needed to finance the NSWFB. The amount of contribution from each insurance company is based on the level of premiums that company earns. The contribution is paid on an **advance payment/ final assessment** principle. The methodology is fully described in the *Act*.

##### 3.1.2 Local Government

Local Government Councils are required to contribute to the State 12.3% of the total net funded contributions needed to finance the NSWFB recurrent operations. The amount of contribution from each Council is based on the estimated recurrent costs of the Fire District in which the Council is located. The State of NSW comprises 186 Fire Districts, seven of which cover more than one Council Area.

##### 3.1.3 The Sydney Fire District

The Sydney Fire District (SFD) costs are apportioned to the 37 Councils within the SFD according to the aggregated rateable land values of each Council.

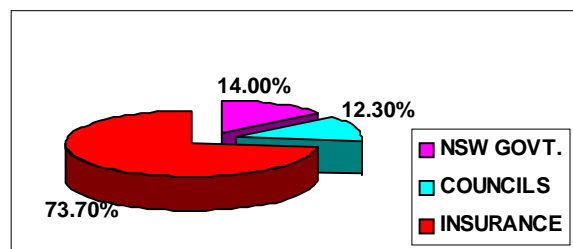


Fig 3.1 NSWFB Funding Contribution

### 4 FUNCTIONAL GROUPS

#### 4.1 Director Prevention and Operational Planning

The Director, Prevention and Operational Planning (DPOP), has the rank of Assistant Commissioner.

DPOP is responsible and accountable for the following:

- Operational Training;
- Communication Centres Operation;
- Breathing Apparatus (BA);
- Hazmat;
- Fleet Officer Operations;
- Equipment Development Officer;
- Bushfire;
- Rescue;
- Fire Investigation;
- Fire Safety; and
- Public Education.

#### 4.2 Operational Training

The Training Division co-ordinates all training for the NSWFB and supports training programs within the Regions.

The Manager, Training manages and controls



Training and Specialised Operations, under the direction of DPOP.

This Department consists of several sections and key positions which ensure a co-ordinated approach to high quality training and education.

#### 4.2.1 Recruit Training

It is the responsibility of the Training Division to co-ordinate, prepare, and deliver recruit training and to:

- supervise training exercises and public displays;
- administer training and attendance records;
- conduct student assessment; and
- conduct other administrative functions.

#### 4.2.2 Driver Development Division

It is the responsibility of this Division to train and educate staff in safe driving and operation of emergency vehicles in emergency and non-emergency situations, including:

- pump operation;
- general and specialist appliances, e.g. turntable ladders and hydraulic platforms;
- student assessment; and
- maintenance of student records.

#### 4.2.3 Breathing Apparatus Training

It is the responsibility of this Unit to prepare, co-ordinate, and deliver training for hazardous materials (hazmat) incidents. Also training in the use of BA and to:

- conduct student assessment;

- maintain student records; and
- conduct BA and hazmat research.

#### 4.2.4 Rescue/Bushfire Section

##### Rescue Section

NSWFB Rescue Instructors are responsible for the training, development and assessment of firefighters for registration as rescue operators with the State Rescue Board (SRB). Only registered operators can be attached to accredited NSWFB rescue units.

##### Bushfire Section

It is the responsibility of this section to co-ordinate bushfire fighting operations to protect areas bordering bushland and to:

- train local Brigades in identifying and assessing bushfire hazards (as a result of this training, more Brigades have achieved the required skills for fuel management within their local areas);
- ensure that all hazard reduction operations are carried out in an environmentally responsible manner with the co-ordination of Local Council Officers and Bushfire Brigades;
- train water tanker drivers and chainsaw operators.

#### 4.2.5 Examination Section

It is the responsibility of this unit to plan, develop, co-ordinate, and conduct student assessment and maintain student records.

#### 4.2.6 Training Co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of the Training Co-ordinator to:

- monitor the quality of training provided;
- investigate the suitability of external courses;

- liaise with external providers;
- co-ordinate and monitor access to internal and external courses;
- assist staff applying for study leave; and
- maintain relevant student records.

#### 4.2.7 Principal Instructors

It is the responsibility of the Principal Instructors to deliver specialist training, within the Sydney region, including cordage and new equipment training. Additionally, they plan and deliver practical training exercises, including Interagency Disaster Management exercises;

#### 4.2.8 Equipment Development Office

The Equipment Development Office evaluates new items of fire fighting equipment (including personal protective clothing) in line with the latest advances in technology, and reviews the future suitability of existing equipment. The office also investigates matters referred from the OH & S office which are identified as effecting, or having the potential to effect the efficiency of operational personnel. The Equipment Development Officer (EDO) is required to liaise with the various operational support services to ensure that procedural requirements, necessary for the efficient introduction of equipment into the service, are in place.

### 4.3 Hazmat/BA Section

The NSWFB are the combat agency for hazardous materials incidents throughout NSW, except on State waters as defined in the *Marine Pollution Act, 1987*.

#### 4.3.1 Hazmat Section

The Hazmat Section is specially trained and equipped to:

- deal with hazardous materials;

- evaluate, commission and allocate special equipment; and
- manage the servicing of special equipment.

The Section operates from bases at Chullora, Newcastle and Wollongong with specially trained firefighters and specialised response vehicles.

The Section has provided hazardous materials response kits to approximately 200 designated Hazmat Support Fire Stations.

#### 4.3.2 BA Section

It is the responsibility of this Section to service and maintain:

- self-contained BA (both open- and closed-circuit);
- oxygen resuscitators;
- personal distress units (PDU);
- gas detecting instruments; and
- other BA ancillary items.

### 4.4 Public Education Section

The Public Education Section provides training to the community, including hospitals, nursing homes, detention centres, government departments, and commercial and industrial establishments. This training includes:

- fire prevention;
- fire safety;
- public fire awareness; and
- practical fire fighting strategies and techniques.

The Section operates on a commercial basis. The income generated from training and service charges contributes towards cost recovery.

The courses conducted by the Section enable employers to meet their obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and other statutory requirements. The courses also impart theoretical and practical expertise to employees.

The materials and courses provided by the Public Education Section to the community include general courses, seminars and lectures.

#### 4.4.1 General Courses

- **Fire Awareness:** provides a basic understanding of fire and fire prevention;
- **First Attack Fire Fighting:** identifies various types of fire and the types of equipment to be used; and
- **Basic/Advanced Warden:** provides a more advanced awareness of fire and fire fighting techniques.

#### 4.4.2 Seminars

- Child Care Centre Fire Safety;
- Registered Club Employees' Fire Safety; and
- Health Care Facilities Fire Safety.

#### 4.4.3 Lectures

- Fire Awareness;
- First-Aid in Fire Fighting; and
- Evacuation.

#### 4.4.4 Fire Safety Officers' Courses

These courses enable fire safety officers to carry out duties as required by the *Health Commission Guidelines* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

## 4.5 Fire Safety and Prevention

The NSWFB, through statute and by regulation, are required to provide expert advice in many areas of fire safety and prevention within the community. This advice includes the following areas:

- developing and reviewing building regulations and standards;
- carrying out building inspections; and
- providing advice on structural fire safety.

The NSWFB has developed a key strategy for educating the community to:

- identify the dangers of fire;
- prevent fire; and
- deal with fire when it occurs.

Research shows that the incidence of fire is growing at a rate similar to that of population growth. Investment in fire safety and fire prevention programs is aimed at reducing the incidence of fire; and preventing losses due to fire.

When the NSWFB was regionalised in 1991, specialist staff were appointed to Regional Offices. These specialists have since expanded the NSWFB educational and advisory services in local communities. Regionalisation has also enabled the NSWFB to expand its child education activities.

## 4.6 Library

The Library provides specialised resources to meet the information needs of the NSWFB management and members with collection strengths in the subject areas of fire fighting, fire prevention, fire service administration, hazmat, and rescue.

The Library helps management and members to access these resources by providing services in lending, current awareness, selective dissemination of information, reference, and research.

The Library is located at Chullora. Its services are available to all members of the NSWFB and the Library may be accessed by members of the community.

#### 4.7 Fire Investigation Unit

It is the responsibility of the Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) to reduce the incidence and effect of fires by identifying the origin and cause of fires. The FIU responds to major fires, fatalities, serious injuries, and to incidents where it is difficult to establish origin and cause. The FIU also trains firefighters to determine the cause of fire and disseminates information to the Police and other groups.

#### 4.8 State Fire Command

Operational State Communications consist of the State Fire Command Centre at Alexandria and Regional Centres. The staffing and facilities of these Centres are determined by the needs of the areas they serve. The regional centres are located at:

- Newcastle;
- Wollongong;
- Katoomba;
- Gosford;
- Lismore;
- Turvey Park; and
- Albury.

It is the responsibility of these centres to dispatch NSWFB to emergencies and to support emergency operations. They also have the responsibility to:

- ensure that an appropriate and rapid response to 000 calls is provided by either NSWFB or DBFS;
- communicate incident information to senior officers and other agencies

responsible for co-ordinating the resources required.

All Centres have reference material on chemicals and other hazards, emergency management plans for significant hazards within their areas, and *Datachem* on computer.

Some Centres have electronic street directories that assist in locating an incident and in determining the nearest resources to respond to the incident.

During 1996 a new Computer Aided Dispatch system will be progressively installed at Alexandria, Newcastle, Wollongong, and Katoomba to provide statewide coverage.

#### 4.9 Operational Support

Operational Support, an integral part of NSWFB, provides specialist services to the NSWFB operational units.

The Director Operational Support (DOS) is responsible and accountable for the following five integrated Units:

- Supply;
- Fleet Management;
- Engineering;
- Communications; and
- Properties.

Operational Support delivers objective, long-term strategic planning, in such areas as:

- equipment suitability;
- operational availability and effectiveness;
- functionality;
- safety; and
- value for money.

### 4.9.1 Supply Services

The Supply Services Unit co-ordinates the acquisition of all material, equipment, goods, and services that are necessary for the efficient and cost-effective functioning of the operational areas. Acquisition can range from routine purchasing to major equipment acquisition.

The functions of the Supply Services Unit include:

- supply policy and procedure;
- acquisition and logistics support;
- supply and market research;
- tendering, evaluation, contracting and contract management;
- standardisation of equipment within the Configuration Management (CM) protocol;
- quality assurance; and
- preparation and planning.

Supply Services Unit uses configuration management principles, and a sophisticated inventory and cataloguing system to ensure compatibility with existing or planned purchases.

The Unit also is responsible for the assembly and repair of various types of fire fighting hoses and fittings.

### 4.9.2 Fleet Management

The Fleet Management Unit is responsible for all activities relating to vehicles and mobile plant required to meet the NSWFB operational and support commitments.

Fleet Management has the responsibility to:

- provide vehicles and mobile plant to meet NSWFB operational and support commitments;

- allocate specialist fire fighting mobile plant, and support vehicles;
- arrange transport for vehicles for scheduled maintenance exchange or major repair;
- ensure vehicles and equipment are available to meet planned needs;
- establish and monitor preventative maintenance service schedules;
- monitor the use, operational performance, and maintenance requirements of the fleet;
- establish and implement corporate fleet policy and procedures;
- maintain records on each vehicle and fleet as a whole, including service history; accidents, insurance claims, and registration;
- operate an *RTA* authorised inspection station; and
- maintain and repair specialist fire fighting vehicles and equipment.

### 4.9.3 Engineering Services

The Engineering Services Unit (ESU) provides specialised mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, electro-mechanical and technical facilities.

The ESU has the responsibility to:

- provide advice and assistance on the technical aspects of acquiring, modifying, and maintaining hydraulic, mechanical and electrical equipment;
- analyse performance criteria;
- develop and produce technical specifications;
- provide and co-ordinate documentation including Recommended Practices and Codes of Practice;

- evaluate vehicles and equipment being considered for purchase;
- review safety requirements;
- establish operating procedures;
- conduct quality assurance and risk analysis;
- recommend preventative maintenance procedures for plant, equipment, and specialist fire fighting vehicles.

#### 4.9.4 Communications Services

The Communications Unit provides the NSWFB voice and operational data communications infra-structure, including telephone, radio, automatic fire alarm network, and computer-aided dispatch systems.

The Communications Unit has the responsibility to:

- establish operational and technical requirements;
- develop specifications for systems and equipment; and
- co-ordinate project management, installation, and field and workshop maintenance services.

The Communications Unit's functions include:

- setting policies and procedures;
- preparing Recommended Practices and Codes of Practice for equipment operation and maintenance;
- carrying out systems and equipment design;
- ensuring network availability;
- monitoring network utilisation;
- preparing equipment specifications;

- maintaining fire alarm and telephone services databases;
- monitoring of services, installation, modification and refurbishment programs; and
- carrying out workshop and field repair of telecommunications equipment.

#### 4.9.5 Property Services

The Property Services Unit has the responsibility to:

- provide effective State-wide property management so that NSWFB firefighters and support staff have adequate facilities from which they can effectively operate;
- plan and develop new facilities including:
  - standard Fire Station design;
  - special-use buildings;
  - training establishments; and
  - communications buildings;
- acquire and dispose of all NSWFB property and premises throughout NSW (specialist services such as valuation, real estate marketing, and heritage studies are externally tendered);
- assess and introduce new equipment, finishes, or services which may extend the life or improve the operation of the property assets for which Property Services are responsible;
- manage commercial and residential leasing of factory units, office space, and housing throughout NSW;
- undertake Capital Works Development;
- co-ordinate maintenance work by external contractors.



## 4.10 Corporate Strategy Group

The Corporate Strategy Group was set up in February, 1993. The Group is responsible for establishing, developing, and communicating the strategic direction of the NSWFB.

The Director, Corporate Strategy, is responsible for providing independent expert advice to the Commissioner and reports directly to the Commissioner.

The Group is central to the future direction of the organisation and has established co-operative relationships with all divisions and regions within the NSWFB, and with external stakeholders.

The Corporate Strategy Group is made up of three key units:

- Planning and Performance Evaluation;
- Statistics; and
- Operations Research.

### 4.10.1 Planning and Performance Evaluation Unit

This unit has the responsibility to:

- ensure that the submissions from all divisions and regions are appropriate and timely;
- monitor implementation of the strategic plan; and
- assist the Regions to develop Business Plans that are consistent with the Corporate Plan.

### 4.10.2 Statistics Unit

The key responsibility of the Statistics Unit is to compile, monitor, and analyse the Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) data including reports on fires, false alarms, and other incidents.

The AIRS database contains all incident information and this information is used for the following purposes:

- operational research and planning;
- community education and prevention programs;
- resource allocation;
- fire investigation;
- performance measurement; and
- replies to enquiries from insurance companies and other groups regarding the attendance of the NSWFB at particular incidents.

### 4.10.3 Operations Research Unit

This unit has the responsibility to:

- develop and advise on the implementation of plans for future levels of fire services provided by the NSWFB (information from the Statistics Unit through use of the AIRS database supports these plans);
- develop and advise on the implementation of policies for improving the standard of fire cover provided to the community; and
- undertake research for verifying and supporting variations to Fire District boundaries. The unit has developed the Geographic Information System (GIS) to assist in this research;
- continually research improvements in the NSWFB service delivery to the community.

### 4.10.4 Project Implementation

The Corporate Strategy Group, in its project management role, co-ordinates the responsibilities and functions of stakeholders in the projects and programs of NSWFB. This role ensures that each of the stakeholders within the organisation contributes to projects and programs according to the plan approved by Senior Management.



## 5 REGIONALISATION

### 5.1 Introduction

To meet the demands of the emerging technological, social, economic, environmental, and political changes of the 1990's, the NSWFB has undergone extensive change from a centralised to a more devolved regionalised structure. This change was implemented on 6 September 1991. This new structure allows the Department to achieve more effective management.

NSW has been divided into regions. Each region has its own operational command.

The structural change of the organisation and the geographical change of boundaries provide:

- regional areas that coincide with other government departments;
- a centralised corporate structure, with a strengthened regional senior executive;
- more effective communication between members and senior management;
- more accurate dissemination of information through the organisation;
- closer regional liaison with other emergency services;
- regional development by combined services of strategic disaster planning; and
- the comparison of statistical information for the use of the NSWFB and other services.

### 5.2 Regional Areas

The boundaries of each region commence in Sydney. By following local government borders, the boundaries radiate out to divide the State of NSW into four separate areas.

The boundaries of the regions reflect both:

- the integration of metropolitan and country stations; and
- the State-wide role of the NSWFB.

The regions are named according to the geographical area covered within the State.

REGIONS	AREAS
Region North	Sydney Harbour North to Tweed Heads/West to Great Dividing Range
Region North West	North Western Plateau/Darling Downs Area
Region South	Sydney CBD South Coastal NSW and Murray River Area
Region South West	Murrumbidgee Central Darling Area

Table 5A Regions and Areas

### 5.3 Unincorporated Area

One very sparsely populated area within the South West Region is referred to as an **unincorporated area** in terms of regionalisation. This area is in the far north-western part of NSW, and it has only one major town: Broken Hill.

REGION	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	ZONE 6
North	North Sydney/ Lower North Shore/ North Peninsula	Northern Suburbs	Newcastle/ Central Coast - Country, Urban	Upper Hunter Valley	Mid North Coast	Northern Rivers
North West	Cumberland	Sydney West	Central Western	Orana	New England	-
South	Sydney CBD Eastern Suburbs	Southern Suburbs	Wollongong - Country, Urban	Murray	-	-
South West	Inner West	Sydney South West	Riverina	-	-	-

**Table 5B Zones within Regions**

### 5.4 Zones

Each region is divided into a number of zones. The number of zones in a region depends on the area of the region and the level of hazard involved. The size of a zone depends on the amount of hazards and the type of hazards within that zone.

The four regions contain a total of eighteen zones: eight zones are located in the greater Sydney area and ten zones are in the country area.

The zones North 3 and South 3 are not officially divided, but each covers two areas: urban and country. These unofficial divisions are necessary because each zone has a high-risk city area and a country area.

ZONE	CITY URBAN AREA	COUNTRY AREA
North 3	Newcastle	Central Coast
South 3	Wollongong	Wollongong

**Table 5C Zone - Urban & Country Area**

### 5.5 Fire Districts

The provisions of the *Fire Brigades Act* apply to the 186 Fire Districts within NSW.

A Fire District can be:

- a municipality;
- a shire;
- a group of municipalities or shires; and/or
- a part of a municipality or shire.

A Fire District can also include a:

- **Restricted Area;**
- National Park; and/or
- Historic Site, or State Recreational Area.

Boundaries of a Fire District are established by agreement between the Department and Local Government with Ministerial approval. The Department’s annual report to Parliament contains a complete list of all Fire Districts.

Each Fire Station has a defined area of operation:

- in small country towns, the area of operation may be the entire Fire District;
- in larger towns and surrounding areas, a number of Fire Stations may be included in a single Fire District; and

- in major populated centres, such as Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong, a large number of Councils and Shire areas are combined to form a single large Fire District.

## **5.6 The Greater Sydney Area (GSA)**

The Greater Sydney Area (GSA) is a large Fire District covering thirty-seven local government areas. The GSA is bounded :

- on the north by Pittwater and Hawkesbury Shires;
- on the west by Penrith; and
- on the south/southwest by Sutherland and the City of Liverpool.

The GSA incorporates a total of eight zones: Zone 1 and Zone 2 from each of the four regions.

## **5.7 Command Structure**

To allow the Department to manage the vast area of NSW, a new command structure was introduced with regionalisation. This structure combines a centralised corporate executive group with regional senior executives.

The regional command structure manages that region from a centralised regional office. The regional senior executive reports directly to the Deputy Commissioner.

Operational Command Structure is detailed in Fig 5.1.

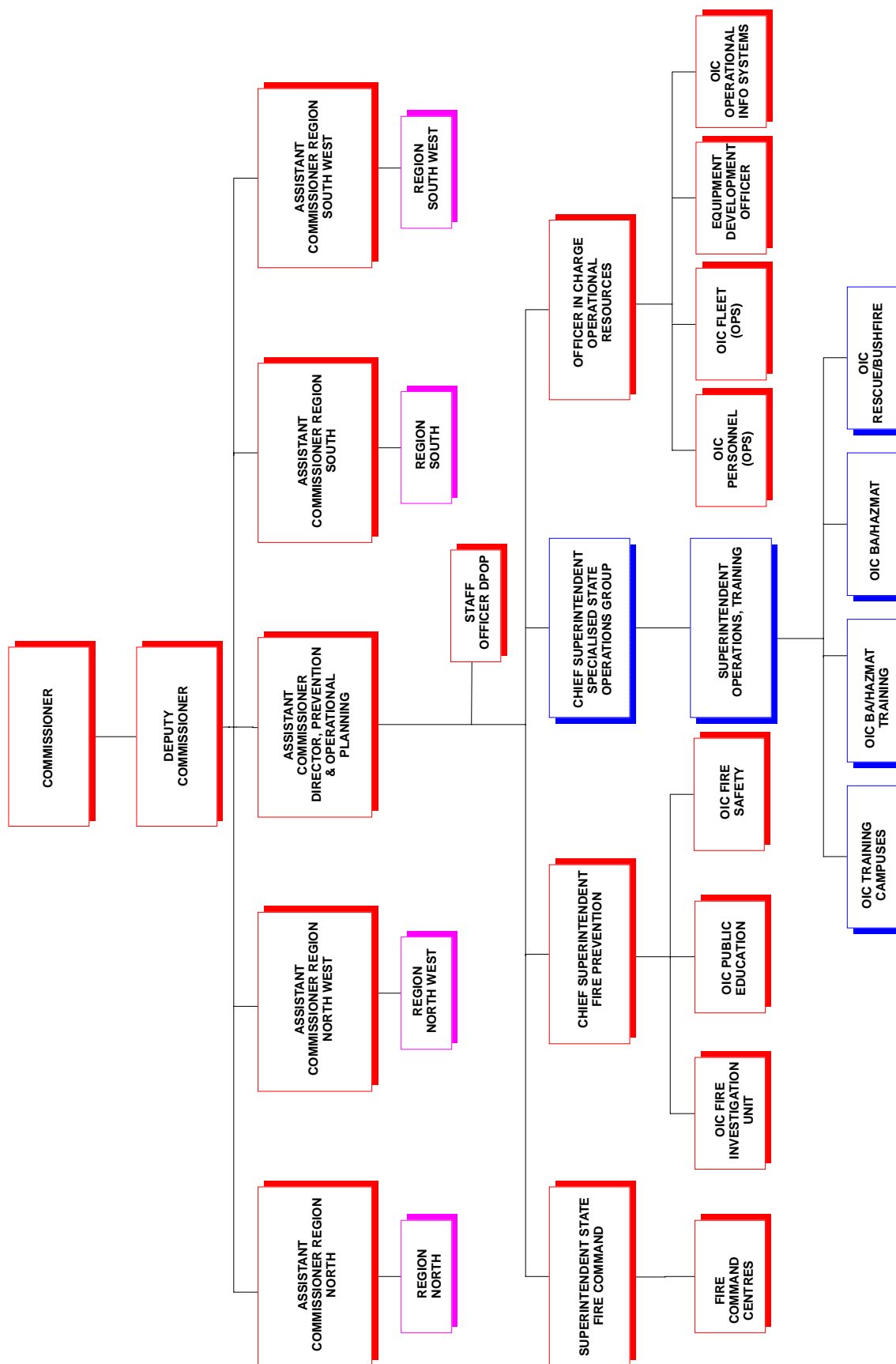


Fig 5.1 Operational Command Structure

## 5.8 Regional Command

The regional command structure is as follows:

- Assistant Commissioner;
- Chief Superintendent;
- Superintendents;
- Inspector;
- Principal Instructors;
- Senior Instructors;
- Fire Prevention Officer;
- Manager of Finance and Accounting;
- Administration and Human Resources Manager; and
- Clerical Staff.

The command structure is identical for all regions except that Region North and Region South have an additional Chief Superintendent and Inspector. These additional positions assist in managing Zone 3 (Urban).

Zone 3 in Region North includes the Fire District of Newcastle and country area stations.

Zone 3 in Region South includes the Fire District of Wollongong and country area stations.

Newcastle and Wollongong areas are heavily populated. The large population and the nature of industry in each city create a hazard categorisation well above other areas within the region. These areas therefore have a higher profile and justify a higher ranking OIC.

For management purposes, the divisions of Zone 3 in North Region and South Region are:

REGION	ZONE 3 URBAN	ZONE 3 COUNTRY
North	N3U (Newcastle)	N3C
South	S3U (Wollongong)	S3C

**Table 5D Divisions of Zone 3**

## 5.9 Command Officers

After the geographic division of the State into regions and zones, centralised and regional zone command offices were set up within each region and zone.

### 5.10 Regional Office

The Regional Office, located in the GSA, is the command centre for the whole of the Region. From this office, the Assistant Commissioner (Regional Commander) and the Chief Superintendents manage the whole of the Region.

### 5.11 Zone Office

A Zone Office is set up in each zone to provide closer and more effective management of that zone. This arrangement provides:

- more accurate dissemination of information through the organisation;
- close liaison with other local emergency services; and
- enhanced communication with more senior management.

The Zone Office is usually located in a large central town. From this office, the Superintendent (Zone Commander) effectively manages all the stations within that officer's zone.

## 6 RANK IDENTIFICATION

NSWFB permanent ranks from Commissioner to Chief Superintendent are detailed in Table 6A, Superintendent to Leading Firefighter in Table 6B, and Senior Firefighter (15 years or more) to Recruit Firefighter in Table 6C.

### 6.1 Rescue Insignia





NSWFB rescue operators have the word **RESCUE** on their epaulettes and helmet.

### 6.2 Oxygen Regenerative Breathing Insignia

All firefighters qualified to wear and operate Oxygen Regenerative Breathing Apparatus are required to display this qualification: black, adhesive tape, 3 mm wide, attached to the helmet above the current rank insignia tape.

### 6.3 Retained Ranks

NSWFB retained ranks are detailed in Table 6D.

RANK	SHOULDER INSIGNIA	PEAK CAP/HAT	HELMET	GORGETS	CUFF BUTTONS	SHOULDER RANK INSIGNIA
Commissioner	Crest and coat of arms encompassed by a laurel wreath and surmounted by a small impeller and crown.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, double silver oak leaf braid on peak, and silver chin strap. Ornate badge surrounded by laurel leaves, and surmounted by a crown.	White, with black reflective tape.	Black velvet with three oak leaves (silver bullion embroidered).	Three buttons on galatea cuff.	
Deputy Commissioner	Crest and coat of arms encompassed by a laurel wreath, and surmounted by a crown.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, single silver oak leaf braid on peak, and silver chin strap. Ornate badge surrounded by laurel leaves, and surmounted by a crown.	White, with black reflective tape.	Black velvet with three oak leaves (silver bullion embroidered).	Three buttons on galatea cuff.	
Assistant Commissioner	Crest and coat of arms, encompassed by a laurel wreath.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, single silver oak leaf braid on peak, and silver chin strap. Semi-ornate badge, surmounted by a crown.	Red, with silver reflective tape.	Black velvet with three oak leaves (silver bullion embroidered).	Three buttons on galatea cuff.	
Chief Superintendent	Two medium impellers, surmounted by a crown.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, silver braid on peak, and silver chin strap. Semi-ornate badge, surmounted by a crown.	Red, with silver and yellow reflective tape.	Black velvet with three oak leaves (chrome).	Three buttons on galatea cuff.	

**Table 6A Commisioner Chief Superintendent Rank**







RANK	SHOULDER INSIGNIA	PEAK CAP/HAT	HELMET	GORGETS	CUFF BUTTONS	SHOULDER RANK INSIGNIA
Superintendent	Single medium impeller, surmounted by a crown.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, silver braid on peak, and silver chin strap. Semi-ornate badge, surmounted by a crown.	Red, with yellow reflective tape.	Black velvet with straight chrome bar.	Two buttons on galatea cuff.	
Inspector	Single crown.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, silver braid on peak. Semi-ornate badge, surmounted by a crown.	Red, with red reflective tape.	-	One button on galatea cuff.	
Station Officer	Two medium impellers.	Peak Cap - Black oak leaf patterned band, silver strap above peak. Semi-ornate badge, surmounted by a crown.	Lime yellow, with red/white/red reflective tape. Two semi-circular reflective markings, with the words <b>Station Officer</b> on the dome sides of the helmet, above reflective tape.	-	-	
Leading Firefighter	One large impeller.	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with white/red reflective tape.	-	-	

Table 6B Superintendent - Leading Firefighter




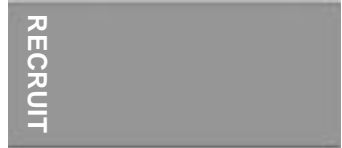
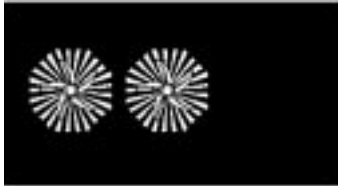



RANK	SHOULDER INSIGNIA	PEAK CAP/HAT	HELMET	GORGETS	CUFF BUTTONS	SHOULDER RANK INSIGNIA
Senior Firefighter (15 years or more)	Three white chevrons, with red crossed axes.	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with white reflective tape.	-	-	
Senior Firefighter	Two white chevrons, with red crossed axes.	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with white reflective tape.	-	-	
Qualified Firefighter	One white chevron, with red crossed axes.	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	-	-	
Below Qualified Firefighter	-	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	-	-	
Recruit Firefighter	Green Epaulettes, with <b>RECRUIT</b> wording.	Wide Brimmed Hat Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with green reflective tape.	-	-	

Table 6C Senior Firefighter 15 Yrs + - Recruit Firefighter Rank

RANK	SHOULDER INSIGNIA	WIDE BRIMMED HAT	HELMET	SHOULDER RANK INSIGNIA
Captain	Two medium impellers.	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with red/white/red reflective tape. Two semi-circular reflective markings, with the word <b>Captain</b> on the dome of the helmet, above reflective tape.	
Deputy Captain	One medium impeller.	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with white reflective tape.	
Retained Firefighter (15 years or more)	Three red chevrons, with red crossed axes.	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	
Retained Firefighter (10 years or more)	Two red chevrons, with red crossed axes.	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	

**Table 6D Retained Ranks**


RANK	SHOULDER INSIGNIA	WIDE BRIMMED HAT	HELMET	SHOULDER RANK INSIGNIA
Retained Firefighter (5 years or more)	One red chevron, with red crossed axes.	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	
Retained Firefighter (Less than 5 years)	-	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with yellow reflective tape.	
Retained Firefighter (Less than 6 months)	-	Navy, with black/red puggaree and Brigades badge.	Lime yellow, with green reflective tape.	

Table 6E Retained Ranks